

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EUR-08
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6508

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3994

LIMDIS

BUCHAREST FOR VIETS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, IS, XF, OREP (STONE, RICHRD B.)

SUBJECT: CODEL STONE MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING A MEETING WITH CODEL STONE JUNE 3,
PRIME MINISTER RABIN SAID HE COULD SEE REAL PROBLEMS AND
IMPLICATIONS BYEOND ISRAEL'S BORDERS IF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT
HOLDS TO THE POSITIONS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY THE LIKUD. HE SAID
EGYPT HAS IN GENERAL MET THE OBLIGATIONS IT UNDERTOOK
IN SINAI II BUT THERE ARE INDICATIONS OF CHANGE. HE
DOES NOT BELIEVE EITHER EGYPT OR SYRIA WILL PUSH FOR
A NEW MILITARY CONFLICT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.END SUMMARY

1. SENATOR STONE, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR AND OTHER
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STAFF MEMBERS, MET WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN JUNE 3
AND DISCUSSED THE CURRENT SITUATION WITHIN ISRAEL
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ITS NEIGHBORS RABIN SAID A
CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WAS A NEW PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL
AND, WHILE HE SAW SOME PROBLEMS, HE HAD NO DOUBT
THAT BEGIN WOULD SUCCEED IN FORMING A NEW GOVERN-
MENT.HOWEVER, HE COULD SEE SOME IMPLICATIONS

BEYOND ISRAEL'S BORDERS AND SOME REAL PROBLEMS IF THE LIKUD MAINTAINS ITS PREVIOUS POSITIONS. THESE PROBLEMS WILL BE LESSENERD SOMEWHAT IF THE DMC JOINS THE COALITION; HOWEVER, DMC INSISTENCE ON ELECTORAL REFORM WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES TO JOIN THE COALITION. HE COMMENTED THAT HE KNOWS MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN DMC AND HE KNOWS THEY DID NOT FORM THEIR NEW PARTY IN ORDER TO SIT IN THE OPPOSITION. HE BELIEVES THE DECISION TO BRING DAYAN INTO THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREMATURE. HE COMMENTED THAT THE SITUATION REGARDING THE ISTADRUT ELECTION DOES NOT LOOK TOO GOOD FOR THE LABOR PARTY BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY AT THE PRESENT TIME WHAT THE RESULTS WILL BE ON JUNE 21.

2. IN RESPONSE TO SENATOR STONE'S QUESTION ABOUT RUMORED EGYPTIAN VIOLATIONS OF SINAI II, RABIN SAID ONE MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN EGYPT'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE ITS MILITARY STRENGTH AND ITS ACTIONS REGARDING ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER SINAI II. REGARDING THE LATTER POINT, RABIN SAID EGYPT BASICALLY HAD KEPT ITS COMMITMENTS ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME VIOLATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE MORE BATTALIONS THAN EGYPT IS ENTITLED TO HAVE IN THE REDUCED ARMAMENTS ZONE; THESE BATTALIONS ARE NOT A MILITARY THREAT BUT ISRAEL FEELS EGYPT SHOULD KEEP ITS COMMITMENTS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE FORTIFICATIONS IN THE

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THINNED OUT ZONE WHICH ISRAEL CONSIDERS TO BE A VIOLATION, ALTHOUGH RABIN ADMITTED THAT IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORTIFICATIONS WAS NOT TECHNICALLY A VIOLATION BECAUSE IT WAS CARRIED OUT PRIOR TO AUGUST 1975. HE REPEATED THAT IN HIS OPINION, EGYPT HAS KEPT ITS OBLIGATIONS.

3. REGARDING EGYPTIAN MILITARY STRENGTH, RABIN SAID THAT EGYPTIAN POLICY CLEARLY HAS BEEN TO WORK WITH THE U.S. AT THE COST OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. A DECREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF SOVIET ARMS BECAUSE OF STEPS TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN ITS TIES WITH THE U.S. IS ONE OF THE COSTS. EGYPT HAS PAID IN CHOOSING THIS DIPLOMATIC ACTION RATHER THAN MILITARY ACTION. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT EGYPT IS WEAK MILITARILY, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT AS STRONG AS PREVIOUSLY, AND HE BELIEVES THAT EGYPT WILL NOT PUSH FOR A NEW ROUND OF WARFARE.

4.RABIN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE BELIEVED SYRIA
WOULD ALSO NOT PUSH FOR A NEW ROUND OF WAR,
ESPECIALLY AS LONG AS IT HAS TWO DIVISIONS TIED
DOWN IN LEBANON. HIS ASSESSMENT WAS THAT THE DEAL
MADE AT RIYADH LAST OCTOBER BETWEEN THE SYRIANS,
THE SAUDIS AND THE EGYPTIANS WAS AT THE
INITIATIVE OF THE SAUDIS. UNDER THE TERMS OF THAT
DEAL, SYRIA AGREED TO REVERSE ITS OPPOSITION TO
EGYPTIAN POLITICAL EFFORTS AND TO PERMIT EGYPT TO
TRY TO ACHIEVE BY POLITICAL MEANS WHAT IT HAD BEEN
UNABLE TO DO MILITARILY, I.E., ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. FOR ITS PART, SYRIA GOT A
FREE HAND TO CARRY OUT ITS POLICIES AIMED AT
ESTABLISHING LAW AND ORDER IN LEBANON. SAUDI
ARABIA AGREED TO FINANCE BOTH.THIS AGREEMENT
STILL STANDS, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER
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THERE IS A TIME LIMIT.THE LATEST MEETING IN
RIYADH HAD BEEN SET BEFORE THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS
AND WAS FOR INTER-ARAB CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO
PRINCE FAHD'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON. AS IT TURNED
OUT, THE MEETING ALSO ENABLED THE ARAB LEADERS TO
REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE ISRAELI ELECTION.

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LIMDIS

5. RABIN SAID HIS JUDGMENT OF ARAB REACTION TO THE ELECTION IS THAT ARAB LEADERS DO NOT EXPECT MUCH CHANGE IN ISRAELI POLICY. THEY ARE CONTINUING TO LOOK TO THE US TO EXERT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO MOVE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS. THEY WILL FOCUS PARTICULARLY ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARK THAT THE US IS PREPARED TO USE ALL ITS STRENGTH TO PERSUADE IF NECESSARY AND THEY WILL SAY THAT IF THERE IS NO SUCCESS AT GENEVA, WAR MUST FOLLOW.

6. THE SENATOR ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER TO PREDICT WHAT LIES AHEAD. RABIN SAID PREDICTIONS ARE DANGEROUS BUT HE CAN EXPECT MORE NERVOUSNESS ON THE PART OF THE ARABS AND LESS BELIEF IN ISRAELI COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATIONS UNDER A BEGIN GOVERNMENT. HE THEN NOTED THREE BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ALIGNMENT AND THE LIKUD ON FOREIGN POLICY:
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--A) THE ALIGNMENT HAD MADE CLEAR THAT IT WAS PREPARED FOR TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE IN ALL AREAS IN EXCHANGE FOR FULL PEACE. THIS MEANT THAT ANY ARAB LEADER WHO DID NOT WANT WAR HAD AN EXCUSE NOT TO GO TO WAR. THAT FACTOR MAY NOW HAVE DISAPPEARED WITH THE LIKUD'S CLEAR POSITION OF NO TERRITORIAL COMPROMISES ON THE WEST BANK. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS COULD BE DANGEROUS--IT MAY BE HARDER NOW FOR ARAB LEADERS TO AGREE TO COMPROMISE.

--B) BEGIN HAS ALWAYS OPPOSED ANY INTERIM AGREEMENTS WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS. HOWEVER, ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT ISRAEL HAS ALWAYS EXISTED UNDER LIMITED AGREEMENTS OR UNDER INTERIM SITUATIONS WITHOUT AGREEMENTS. THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS HAD FOUND THAT THE ONLY WAY TO MOVE TOWARD PEACE WAS BY INTERIM STEPS. (RABIN NOTED THAT THIS WAS A CONCEPT WHICH WAS CONCEIVED BY DAYAN.) NOW BEGIN SEEMS TO BE SAYING FULL PEACE OR NOTHING.

--C) RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WILL BE DIFFICULT. FOR ONE THING,

THERE WILL BE CONCERN ABOUT ANNEXATION. BEGIN HAD EARLIER SAID THE TERRITORIES SHOULD BE ANNEXED; IT NOW APPEARS HE WILL NOT HOLD TO THAT AND WOULD EVEN DECLINE TO EXTEND ISRAELI LAW TO THE TERRITORIES. SECOND, THE QUESTION OF SETTLEMENTS WILL BE HANDLED DIFFERENTLY. THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD HAD A POLICY OF SETTLING ONLY IN AREAS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT CHOSE AND PRIORITY WAS GIVEN TO THE AREAS AROUND JERUSALEM, HEBRON AND THE JORDAN VALLEY. THIS POLICY MAY CHANGE UNDER THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT. THIRD, THERE WILL PROBABLY BE A DIFFERENCE IN MATTERS AFFECTING RELIGIOUS SENSITIVITIES. RABIN NOTED THE DELICATE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE PREVIOUS

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GOVERNMENT REGARDING PRAYERS IN THE MACHPELAH CAVE IN HEBRON AND RECALLED THAT BEGIN WAS ALMOST IRRATIONAL IN A DEBATE IN THE KNESSET ON THIS SUBJECT A FEW MONTHS AGO. THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO BEEN VERY CAREFUL ABOUT PRAYERS ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT AND BEGIN HAD OPPOSED THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION WHICH DID NOT PERMIT SUCH PRAYERS. BEGIN'S POSITION ON THESE THREE ISSUES WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR EFFECT ON ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB RESIDENTS OF THE TERRITORIES AND THE WAYS WHICH THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD FOUND TO HANDLE THESE PROBLEMS MAY BE UNDONE; HERE AGAIN RABIN PRAISED DAYAN FOR HAVING BEEN VERY LIBERAL IN HIS VIEWS ABOUT THESE PROBLEMS.

7. THE SENATOR NOTED THAT BEGIN'S VIEWS ABOUT RELIGIOUS ISSUES WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO MANY JEWS OUTSIDE ISRAEL. RABIN SAID THAT IN GENERAL TERMS HE HAD FOUND BEGIN TO BE VERY HELPFUL ON QUESTIONS INVOLVING NATIONAL INTERESTS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE WAS MOST RESPONSIVE IN THE ENTEBBE HIJACKING AND RESCUE. RABIN HAD KEPT HIM FULLY INFORMED AND BEGIN HAD SAID PUBLICLY THAT THE ISSUE WAS NOT ONE OF COALITION/OPPOSITION POLITICS BUT WAS ONE OF NATIONAL INTEREST; HE TOOK THIS POSITION ALTHOUGH HE WAS OPPOSED BY SEVERAL MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY. RABIN SAID HE HAD TALKED BY PHONE WITH BEGIN ON TWO OCCASIONS SINCE THE ELECTION. HE SAID HE HAD NOT YET BEGUN TO GIVE HIM ANY FORMAL BRIEFINGS BUT WOULD ARRANGE TO DO SO AS SOON AS BEGIN HAS FORMALLY BEEN DESIGNATED TO FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.

8. RABIN SAID HE HOPED THAT NOISES FROM WASHINGTON

WOULD SOON QUIET DOWN. IN HIS JUDGMENT THE EFFORT
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BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO CATEGORIZE COUNTRIES FOR
ARMS TRANSFER PURPOSES PLUS THE PRESIDENT'S
STATEMENTS ON HOMELAND AND WITHDRAWAL TO THE '67
BORDERS HAD CLEARLY DAMAGED THE LABOR PARTY IN
THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

9. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY CODEL.
LEWIS

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